

1994

Basics of Parliamentary Procedure

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BASICS OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

INFORMATION ON RULES OF ORDER

Use for reference during meetings

The Order of Business

A typical order of business includes:

Call to order
Roll call (or determine quorum)
Reading and approval of minutes
Reports of officers and standing and
special committees
Unfinished business
New business
Adjournment

Possible additions: invocation or ceremony,
communications, announcements, a speaker,
pass the gavel, etc.

Typical language used by chair

"I call this meeting to order."

"Will the secretary, Joe Davis, please call the
roll?"

"We have a quorum. Will the secretary please
read the minutes of the last meeting?"

"Are there any corrections to the minutes?"

"If there are no (further) corrections, the min-
utes stand approved (as read / as corrected)."

"We'll now move to officers' reports. Will the
treasurer, Maria Johnson, please submit her
report?"

"Are there any questions concerning the the
treasurer's report?" (If none) "Thank you, Maria.
Will the vice-president, Jack Holmes, please
give his report?"

"We'll now move on to unfinished business. At
the last meeting Janice Ryan of the Office
Operations Committee moved that... is there
discussion?"

"The meeting is now open for new business."

"The chair recognizes Nidia Arroyo." (or simply,
"Nidia?")

"... has been moved and seconded that... Is there
discussion?"

"We will now vote on the motion that... All in
favor say 'Aye.' All opposed say 'Nay.' The
motion is carried."

"If there's no objection, the meeting is hereby
adjourned." (Or, "Is there a motion to adjourn?")

Types of motions

Main motions introduce new business before
the group. They take the form of proposing
actions. Example: "I move that we reduce our
first-year dues for new members."

**Motions that bring a question again before
the assembly** provide ways to readdress a
motion considered earlier, but in the same
meeting. Example: "I move we reconsider the
motion, that we reduce the first year dues for
new members."

Subsidiary motions propose various ways of
dealing with a main motion that's on the floor.
Example: "I move that we refer this motion to
committee."

Privileged motions deal with issues requiring
immediate attention but not related to the motion
on the floor. Example: "I move that we recess
until 7:00 pm this evening so that members may
attend the dinner program."

Incidental motions deal with procedural
matters that must be resolved before the meeting
continues. Example: "Point of order. We do not
have a quorum."

Handling a main motion

- Member asks for and gets recognition from the
chair.

- Member says, "I move that..." Another
member seconds motion, or chair asks, "Is there
a second?"

- Chair states motion and asks for discussion.

- Members ask to be recognized and enter into
debate. Maker of motion has first right to floor.
Debate only on merits of motion, addressed only
to chair.

- Debate is closed when no members seek floor,
or when previous question is moved, seconded,
and voted.

- Chair puts question to vote.

- Chair announces result of vote.

While a main motion is pending no other main
motions may be introduced. Privileged,
subsidiary and incidental motions are permitted
in order of rank.

What minutes must include

The kind of meeting being held: regular, special
(e.g., annual), adjourned

The name of your organization

The time, date and place of the meeting

The names of the secretary and presiding
officer serving at that meeting

For small gatherings, the names of all members
present and a list of those absent – for large
gatherings, the number present and the number
absent

Approval of the previous minutes, and any
corrections

Summaries of reports (separate paragraph for
each)

Exact final wordings of all main motions, with
the names of movers

The results of votes on main motions – when
votes are counted or taken by ballot, the numbers
of votes on both sides are usually included

Motions that have been tabled or postponed

Points of order raised and appeals made, with the
chair's ruling on each

Announcements

The time of adjournment

The signature of the acting secretary

Types of votes

Voice vote—most often used.

Rising vote—members stand to be counted.

Show of hands—used in smaller groups instead
of voice or rising votes, if no member objects.

General (or unanimous) consent—members
vote by remaining silent when asked for
objections.

Ballot or roll call—must be done when majority
orders it.

MOTION CHART

Use for reference during meetings

RANKING MOTIONS from highest to lowest	Can interrupt speaker	Need second	Can be debated	Can be amended	Vote required
<i>Privileged motions</i>					
Fix the time to which to adjourn	N	Y	N	Y	Majority
Adjourn	N	Y	N	N	Majority
Take a recess	N	Y	N	Y	Majority
Raise a question of privilege	Y	N	N	N	Chair rules
Call for the orders of the day	Y	N	N	N	Chair rules
<i>Subsidiary motions</i> <i>(when main motion is pending)</i>					
Lay on the table	N	Y	N	N	Majority
Previous question	N	Y	N	N	2/3
Limit/Extend debate	N	Y	N	Y	2/3
Postpone definitely	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
Commit or refer	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
Amend	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
Postpone indefinitely	N	Y	Y	N	Majority
Main motions	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
Motions that bring a question again before the assembly (same rank as main motions)					
Take from the table	N	Y	N	N	Majority
Rescind or amend something previously adopted	N	Y	Y	Y	*
Discharge a committee	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
Reconsider	N	Y	Y	N	*
NON-RANKING MOTIONS Incidental motions (procedural)					
Appeal the decision of the chair	Y	Y	Y	N	Majority
Consideration by paragraph or seriatim	N	Y	N	Y	Majority
Division of a question	N	Y	N	Y	Majority
Division of the assembly	Y	N	N	N	None
Objection to the consideration of a question	*	N	N	N	2/3
Parliamentary inquiry	Y	N	N	N	None
Point of information	Y	N	N	N	None
Point of order	Y	N	N	N	Chair rules
Request permission to withdraw a motion	*	*	N	N	Majority
Suspend the rules	N	Y	N	N	2/3

* See Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised for special rules.

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PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

--at a glance.



Here are some motions you might make, how to make them, and what to expect of the rules.

TO DO THIS:	YOU SAY THIS:	MAY YOU INTERRUPT THE SPEAKER?	DO YOU NEED A SECOND?	IS IT DEBATABLE?	CAN IT BE AMENDED?	WHAT VOTE IS NEEDED?	CAN IT BE RECONSIDERED?
ADJOURN MEETING	"I move that we adjourn"	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
CALL AN INTERMISSION	"I move that we recess for..."	NO	YES	NO	YES	MAJORITY	NO
COMPLAIN ABOUT HEAT, NOISE, ETC.	"I rise to a question of privilege"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO (usually)
TEMPORARILY SUSPEND CONSIDERATION OF AN ISSUE	"I move to table the motion"	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
END DEBATE AND AMENDMENTS	"I move the previous question"	NO	YES	NO	NO	2/3	NO ^①
POSTPONE DISCUSSION FOR A CERTAIN TIME	"I move to postpone the discussion until..."	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES
GIVE CLOSER STUDY OF SOMETHING	"I move to refer the matter to committee"	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES ^②
AMEND A MOTION	"I move to amend the motion by..."	NO	YES	YES ^③	YES	MAJORITY	YES
INTRODUCE BUSINESS	"I move that..."	NO	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES

THE MOTIONS LISTED ABOVE ARE IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE... BELOW THERE IS NO ORDER...

PROTEST BREACH OF RULES OR CONDUCT	"I rise to a point of order."	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE ^④	NO
VOTE ON A RULING OF THE CHAIR	"I appeal from the chair's decision"	YES	YES	YES	NO	MAJORITY ^⑤	YES
SUSPEND RULES TEMPORARILY	"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	NO	YES	NO	NO	2/3	NO
AVOID CONSIDERING AN IMPROPER MATTER	"I object to consideration of this motion"	YES	NO	NO	NO	2/3 ^⑥	— ^⑦
VERIFY A VOICE VOTE BY HAVING MEMBERS STAND	"I call for a division" or "Division!"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
REQUEST INFORMATION	"Point of information"	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO VOTE	NO
TAKE UP A MATTER PREVIOUSLY TABLED	"I move to take from the table..."	NO	YES	NO	NO	MAJORITY	NO
RECONSIDER A HASTY ACTION	"I move to reconsider the vote on..."	YES	YES	— ^⑧	NO	MAJORITY	NO

NOTES:

① Unless vote on question is not yet taken.

② Unless the committee has already taken up the subject.

③ Only if the motion to be amended is debatable.

④ Except in doubtful cases.

⑤ A majority vote in negative needed to reverse ruling of chair.

⑥ A 2/3 vote in negative needed to prevent consideration of main motion.

⑦ Only if the main question or motion was not, in fact, considered.

⑧ Only if motion to be reconsidered is debatable.